

PEACE and UNITY recommended,

IN A

*Farewel* SERMON,

Preached in the

Chapel of WEST-COWES,

IN THE

Isle of WIGHT,

ON

SUNDAY, *October* 31. 1742.

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By HENRY WASHINGTON, M. A.  
of *Queen's College*, in *Oxford*.

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THE LAST SERMON

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TO THE  
Worthy INHABITANTS  
OF THE  
CHAPELRY  
OF  
WEST-COWES,

THE FOLLOWING  
DISCOURSE

Published at their Request,

IS INSCRIBED,

*With all Gratitude and Esteem,*

*By their Obliged and*

*Humble Servant,*

HENRY WASHINGTON.



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## 2 COR. xiii. ii.

*Finally, brethren, Farewel: be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

**T**HE words of the text contain the last advice, which St. Paul gave to the *Corinthians*. In this, and the former epistle, he endeavours to compose the differences, that arose among them, touching a point, which was so far from encouraging *dissention*, that it required the strictest *unanimity*; the regard and esteem due to their respective teachers. One was of *Paul*, another of *Apollos*, and another of *Cephas*. To remove the animosities caused by such *partial* attachments, the *Apostle* proves

to them, in his first epistle, the necessity of union, with the folly of interrupting it, since the *various gifts and abilities* of their teachers pointed all at the *same end*, the *edification* of *Christ's body*, which is the *church*.

IN this second epistle, he pursues the same design; he laments the continuance of their former disorders; and as the last advice of friends makes the deepest impression, and is longest remembered, he collects the force of all his other admonitions into this compendious sentence, which we cannot too frequently attend to, nor too carefully keep in mind: *Finally, brethren, farewell: be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

In discoursing therefore upon these words, it may be useful to consider,

*First, The several duties therein recommended;*

AND,

AND, Secondly, The *motives* suggested to the *due performance* of them.

In the first place, we are exhorted to be *perfect*; which word, according to our *translation*, implies a continual progress in the pursuit of *all* those virtues and graces, which are either amiable in themselves, or exhibit *any* resemblance of the divine nature. And, in this sense, it undoubtedly concerns every one of us to be *perfect*, as our *Father*, who is in heaven, is *perfect*. But, if we consult the *original*, and explain the word there made use of, by the sense it bears in other places, we shall find, that the Apostle exhorts us, not so much to perfection in *general*, as to a *particular kind* of it; the uniting of divisions, the composing of differences, and the practice of the great duties of peace and charity, which are the *bond* of *perfectness*.

As there *must be heresies*, so likewise *divisions*. A difference in constitution; im-



preffions of education, reading, or company; the untowardness of rough, or the pliancy of softer, passions; the undue contempt or esteem of another's judgment; a will depraved by interest or vice; or, lastly, a natural weakness of the intellectual faculties; all these will necessarily occasion a *diversity* in our sentiments both of things and persons. And this more particularly, in cases of *seeming* or *real* moment, produces controversy and opposition. The reason of which *may* be, that the *will* and *passions* cannot so easily recede, when drawn forth by an object, which the *understanding* recommends as most worthy of their embracement. And hence *perhaps* it is, that *religious affairs*, where men disagree in their opinions, are often managed with *greater heat*; because the regular conduct and due decision of them is of the *greatest consequence*. However, tho' it be *natural* to *differ* in matters of religion, and too *customary* to do it with immoderate zeal, and excessive fervor, yet it is by no means *commendable*; and *custom* is but a *weak excuse* for the violation  
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of a *divine command*. When therefore such divisions happen in any society, as unavoidably they will, the business is, not to *widen*, but to *close*, the breach; to be *perfect*, as the Apostle exhorts, or, to be *knit together*. And then it follows,

BE of *good comfort*. This phrase will admit of different significations. It may be an exhortation to patience in trouble, or to courage under persecution. But, if we may collect the sense of it from its being ranked in the text among other persuasives to peace and unity, it should seem to be a caution given the *Corinthians*, not to be overwhelmed with *too much* sorrow for past divisions; but to set themselves with a chearful composure of mind to *correct* an error, which it would be *hurtful* and *sinful* to *persist* in. Be of *good comfort*, i. e. Let not former divisions fill your hearts with any farther grief, than what is necessary to engage your care and concern in *uniting* them. A piece of advice highly requisite; as excessive grief, upon *committing*

*mitting* any fault, may become a particular hindrance to the *amendment* of it. The truth indeed is, that the tears of immoderate sorrow for our offences often flow, not from *love* or *affection*, but from *pride* or *despondency*; the former of which is abashed at the discovery of a weakness, which it was not before aware of, and is unwilling to acknowledge; the latter cramps the struggles of the mind to recover itself, by representing them as vain and fruitless. So that to restore peace and quiet, where it has once been lost, nothing can contribute more, than such a modest hope of pardon for past divisions, as arises from a principle of true humility. It must undoubtedly create uneasiness in a generous mind, that it has been betrayed into heat of anger and resentment. However, it *sometimes* happens, that the *good man's* trouble on that account is, in the end, of greater use to him, than if he had never had occasion for it, by always keeping himself in an easy state of unruffled tranquillity. For, as to *know ourselves aright* is a peculiar help to the attainment of



of every virtue, so to have been hurried by impetuosity of passion, or intemperate zeal, into *a breach of union*; when weighed by humility, which sets the *goodness of God* against *present surprize*, and his *grace* against *future temptation*, may become a powerful motive to *seek peace and ensue it* hereafter, with greater vigour and industry. *Be, therefore, of good comfort.* And then it is added,

*Be of one mind.* Now by this we are not to understand, that *all* are bound to entertain the *same* opinion of every thing; that being as impossible as for *all* to have the *like* features and complexion, or for every eye to be *equally* affected with the *same* object. As therefore an exact and universal agreement in sentiments is what cannot be expected from *men*, we must have recourse to some other interpretation of this precept, better suited to *their* nature and ability; which is, that men should endeavour, as much as possible, after unity in *opinion*, but, where *that* is impracticable,

cable, after an harmony in *will and affections*. There are certain *fundamentals* of religion, wherein if men differ openly and obstinately, they can no more maintain *spiritual communion* with each other, than, without agreeing in some settled rules and principles, they can preserve *trade and commerce*. But then, as it would be wrong in *men* to contend about the *situation* and *produce* of a *country*, when their accounts of it only vary in some *trifling instances*; so it is highly blameable in *Christians* to *separate* upon a difference in opinion concerning the *outward ornaments* and *appendages* of religion, while they all agree in acknowledging the *substance*, and admiring the *beauty* of it. Indeed, with regard to divisions of any kind, if we cannot possibly *unite*, yet it may be in our power to *lessen* them; and the most probable way of doing this, is the *forbearing* of one another in *love*. An endeavour to bring all men to the same standard of *judgment* with ourselves, would be like stretching them to the same size of *body*. The *attempt* would be sure to give pain  
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to the mind, and the *success* of it could only boast of an unnatural distorted equality. Besides, the mind is impatient under *any* restraint, except the *willing* one of love. Hope and fear indeed may for a while *force* and *keep* down its spring; but then it is dissatisfied and uneasy; and the pressure is no sooner removed, but it rebounds and starts up with a sudden violence into its native freedom. We usually find, that the most steady converts, as well as truest friends, are made by gentle and endearing means. By addressing to their *wills* and *affections*, we more easily gain upon their *reason*. And to remove their prejudices and aversions by a *meek* and *charitable* behaviour, has sooner brought men to an agreement, than the most solid and unanswerable *arguments*, when accompanied with *heat* and *eagerness*. So that, even out of *prudence*, we should abstain from all severity of temper, bitter reflections, and hard censures: not only because it is unfair to condemn others for a *particularity* in their sentiments, which perhaps is unavoidable, or



of small consequence; but because, by a forbidding moroseness, we may possibly so *increase it*, as to make what was before *indifferent*, become really *evil*, and what was of *little moment*, of a *dangerous tendency*. Be therefore of *one mind*: and by the performance of this duty, we shall be more easily led to comply with the next advice the Apostle gives, to *live in peace*.

By *living in peace* may be understood the *outward act* flowing from the *inward affection*; unanimity in *will* and *senti-ments* being always followed by a *peaceableness of behaviour*. Indeed, to secure and enforce the latter of these duties, the several precepts of the text directly tend. We are there exhorted to be *perfect*, or to compose our divisions; to be of *good comfort*, or to forbear all immoderate sorrow, which might prevent our composing them; and, because they usually arise from our thoughts and desires, to regulate our judgments, and sweeten our dispositions, or to be of *one mind*: and, when

when this is done, our *strife*, which is like the letting out of water, will soon come to an end; the breach, that diverted the current of our affections, be made up, and all things return into their proper channel; we shall *live in peace*. A duty, not of greater importance, than extent; and which, tho' but *one branch* of the divine commandment, is *exceeding broad*: For it comprehends all, whom we converse with, for its *object*; and, in the *manner* of performing it, calls for the exerting of our utmost vigour. If it be *possible*, says St. Paul in another place, *as much as lieth in you*, live peaceably with *all men*. A command so unlimited, that it obliges us to discharge *every* office of humanity and good-neighbourhood; to smoothe the ruggedness of our own tempers, to endeavour, by condescension, to soften that of others; and, rather than give any *seeming affront*, even bear with *real injuries*; if imprudence, or want of experience, has misled us into any offence, to acknowledge and correct our error; where another is mistaken, to make allowance, and for-

give ; where a flame has been kindled, to be the first in quenching, where a strife or tumult, the first in appeasing, it ; to reconcile the variance of contending parties, by insinuating and improving the most favourable constructions of their mutual behaviour ; by effacing the remembrance of past divisions, and recalling to their minds the more delightful scenes of former friendship.

AND, after this description of the duty of peace, can there need any stronger motives to excite us to the practice of it ? Even thus *briefly* to enumerate its several offices, is *largely* to recommend it. 'Tis a kind of music and harmony, considered in its *own nature* ; and, in its certain *effects*, the health and happiness of the mind. It is the silver cord of friendship, the firmest bond of christian society, and, like those softer oils, which facilitate the revolution of the wheels of some great machine, it keeps all the movements of public and private life a going, easily and without noise. Yet these *inherent* charms  
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of peace, however amiable and engaging, are not the *only* attractives to the pursuit of it. The *Apostle* subjoins still *higher* inducements; the *example* of God himself, and the certain assurance of *his blessing*. But these will fall more properly under the *second head* of discourse, wherein I proposed to consider,

**THE motives** suggested to the *performance* of the duties above recommended.

**I F** we live *in peace*, we have a promise, that the *God of love and peace* shall be *with us*. God is the *God of love*. This is his *darling* attribute. It was *this* first prompted him to *make man*, to *preserve* and to *redeem* him; to spread abroad the *beauties* of the creation for his *present* entertainment, and prepare the *joys of heaven* for his *future happiness*. He is also the *God of peace*. In heaven, where he more immediately resides, there can be no confusion; and upon earth, he is neither the *author* nor *approver* of it. There is no *strife* among the thrones and  
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dominions, the principalities and powers, *distinct* orders of his angels, because there is *no envy*. And with regard to men, as he *calls* them to peace by his *precept*, so he *invites* them by his *pattern*. He was not only in Christ *reconciling* the world unto himself, but has also committed to his ministers the word of *reconciliation*. And can the God of love be pleased with *hatred and enmity*, or the God of peace with *discord and variance*? 'Tis as impossible for him to delight in any thing *contrary* to his own nature, as it is for us to be *finally* unhappy in doing what is *agreeable* thereto. Let, therefore, all the fury of our passions be laid; let the swellings of division subside; let peace smoothe every ruffling of our minds, as a calm does the face of the deep; and let every breast, thoroughly clear and transparent, discover nothing at the bottom, but affection and sincerity! *Blessed* are the *peace-makers*; they who are peaceable *themselves*, and endeavour to compose the differences of *others*; for they shall be called, they shall be indeed, the children of

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of God, as expressing in their behaviour the strongest resemblance of his most amiable perfections.

BUT farther. It is *expressly* declared, that if we live in peace, God will be *with* us : a phrase which denotes a vast *effusion* of divine blessings. He will be *with* us, in procuring and preserving to us the several benefits and conveniencies of society and intercourse. These are the common and invaluable fruits of a peaceable demeanour, and should be a very powerful inducement to our acquiring and improving it. Behold, says the royal Psalmist, bespeaking our attention ; behold, how good and joyful a thing it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity ! Indeed, what can be more desirable, where interest or inclination has brought men together, than for *all* distinction to be laid aside, *except* the decent one of rank and abilities ; for every mind to breathe mutual love ; for every tongue to speak the language of the heart ; and every hand to engage in every good office,



office, that may either increase the *sweets* of *private friendship*, or promote the *welfare* of the *public community*? What more pleasing in its *appearance*, than to see every countenance open, and undisguisedly serene; to observe men forming themselves into circles of acquaintance without fear or jealousy, talking of business with mutual confidence, or walking to the house of *God* as friends? And yet this happy state, this agreeable prospect, is what *peace* presents us with, and what *God*, by promising to be *with* us, has encouraged us to expect. So that we cannot imagine holy *David* speaks only in the *beat* of *fancy*, or a *flight* of *poetry*, when he compares the delight attending upon this duty, to the rich ointment poured out upon *Aaron's* head, or the dew of *Hermon*, which fell upon the hill of *Sion*; since *cool reason* will justify the similitude, and experience shews, that no perfume can be more *reviving* to the spirits, nor any dew more *refreshing* to the thirsty mountains, than the hope or  
return

return of *peace*, to a generous mind,  
that is *wearied* with *divisions*.

ANOTHER blessing implied in *God's* promise to be *with* us, and which by far exceeds the former, as being of a *spiritual* nature, is the comfort of a *good conscience*, and the expectation of future *blessedness*. And this, if we live in *peace*, we shall be *doubly* intitled to, because thereby performing a duty, which the scriptures so earnestly inculcate, both as the cement of society *here*, and a necessary preparation for the happiness of heaven *hereafter*. The exhortation in the text is, in other words, to keep the *unity* of the *spirit* in the *bond of peace*; and the natural effect of our compliance with it will be, that custom and habit will so *refine* our tempers, and *tune* our passions, that, when we depart hence, we shall the more easily mingle with the *endearments* of saints and angels, and the more readily fall in with their general concert of *love* and *harmony*.

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AND this being sufficient to *explain* and *enforce* the duties recommended in the text, I come now towards the conclusion of this discourse, and (I speak it with reluctance) of my ministry among you! Indeed, the latter is a time, which, if gratitude be a duty, it would ill become me even to *reflect* upon, with a sorrow capable of any other mitigation, than what this thought will afford, that the *mind* may be *present* where the *body cannot*, and that, where-ever I am, the just sense, I retain of your undeservedly kind treatment, will still engage me as *affectionately* to wish for, and as *heartily* to rejoice in, your welfare and happiness, as if I *continued* under *stronger* and more *immediate* obligations *personally* to promote it.

WITH regard to my *successor*\*, as it is your *duty*, so I hope it will become your *delight*, to receive *his* instructions with

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a *candid* and *teachable* disposition, with *unprejudiced* attention, and *unfeigned* humility. Obey them, says the *Apostle*, that have the *rule* over you, or that are your *guides*, and *submit* yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with *joy*, and not with *grief*.

AND here permit me, with a *proper variation*, to make the request and profession of the same *Apostle*: *Pray* for us; for we are in all things *willing* to live *honestly* and *peaceably*. It is indeed entirely from a love of *peace*, that throughout this *last* discourse, I have endeavoured to recommend this duty to your *affections* by delineating the *beauty*, and to your *understandings* by exhibiting the *importance*, of it. *Motives*, that can hardly fail of exciting you to the constant practice of it, if you consider withal, how highly it will contribute, not only to your *spiritual*, but also to your *temporal*, advantage.

You can no more be happy in *this*, than in the *next* world, without *loving* one another. Diffensions of any long continuance beget a fixed and inveterate hatred; and this is the very rust and canker of the mind; it not only destroys the lustre and beauty of its virtues, but eats into and wastes that inward satisfaction and complacency, which is the very ground and substance of every rational pleasure. Nay, such diffensions are, in the end, as pernicious to *societies*, as prejudicial to *particular persons*; and have frequently occasioned their ruin, by so loosening their frame, that they have either fallen by their own weight, or been more easily overthrown by the attempts of undermining subtilty, or open malice. Every city and house *divided against itself*, says our blessed Saviour, *shall not stand*: Whereas peace and unity will render men both easy in themselves, and secure against any attacks from without, either by the strength of joint counsel, and united force, in repelling them,

or



or by gaining universal esteem, and so hindering them from being offered. The advice of *Solomon* on this occasion will deserve your regard : Leave off contention, before it be meddled with. Divisions are like the burnings of a fever, or the agonies of a convulsion, which always leave the blood weak, and the body faint and languishing. And you may generally observe, that the constitution of any *political body* is firmest, and the complexion of it most healthy, not when *party* flushes it with *sudden heat*, or animates it with a short-lived vigour ; but when *peace* and *charity* inspire its members with a *gentle warmth* of affection, preserve them in the unconstrained discharge of their proper functions, and keep up through the whole a regular and free circulation of kind expressions, and friendly offices.

IF, then, there be any *consolation* in *Christ*, if any *comfort* of *love*, if any *fellowship* of the *spirit*, if any bowels and mercies, *be like-minded* ; have the *same*  
*love,*



*love, be of one accord, be of one mind; let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. And may the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever! Amen.*



*F I N I S.*

